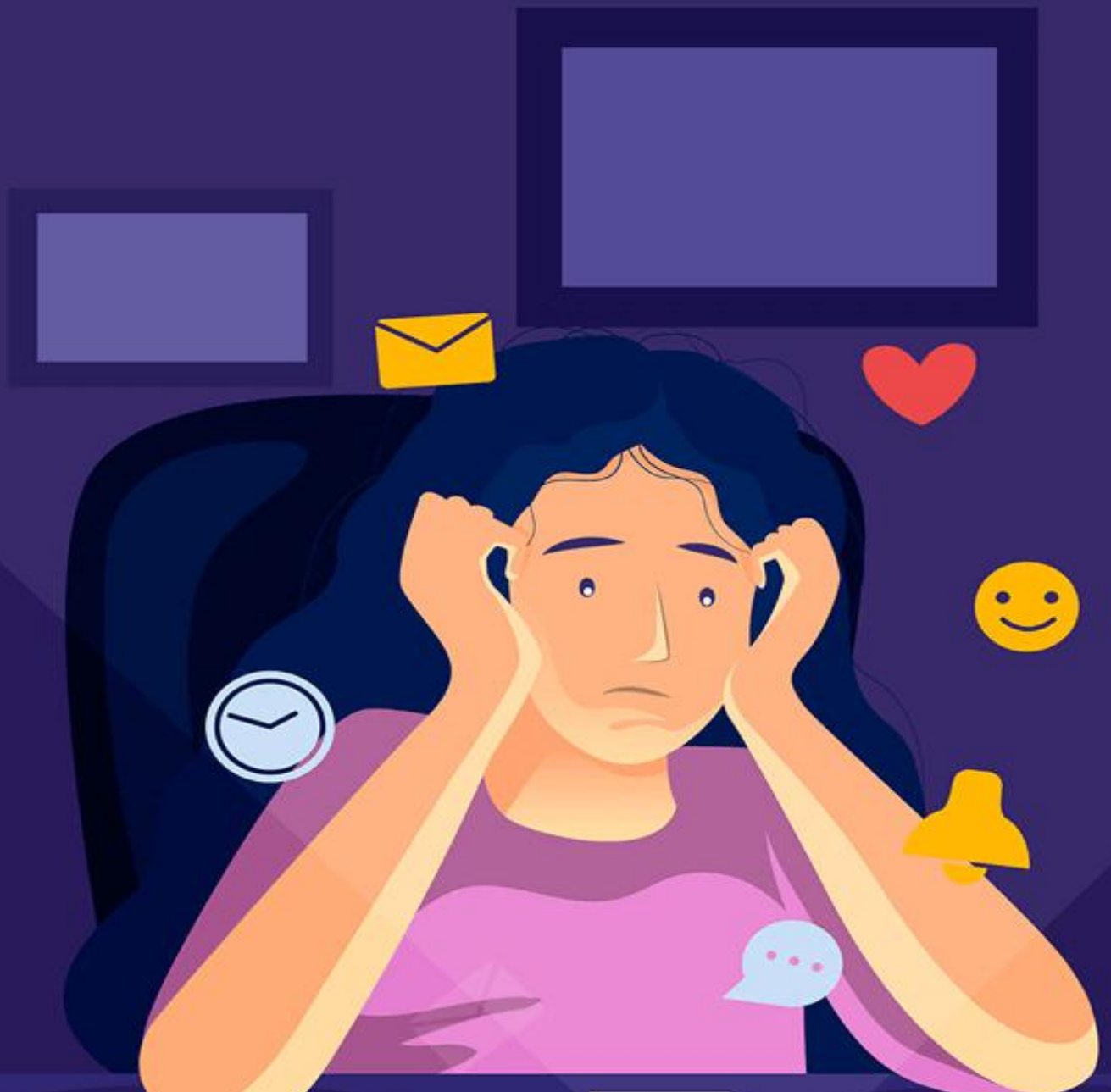


DISABLING DISTRACTION

HOW TO OVERCOME THE SCATTERED MIND
AND MASTER YOUR FOCUS



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Introduction

Have you ever imagined why your workdays spiral out of control? Do you plan your day sometimes and notice that you are distracted within just a few hours? Do you find yourself procrastinating or find it difficult to concentrate on your tasks? Does that sound like what usually happens to you?

Now, imagine yourself at the end of the day, breathing a sigh of relief, knowing that you've accomplished everything you need to. Again, how will you feel knowing that you are on top of all your activities while executing them effectively? Of course, you will probably sleep well at night with your mind at rest.

May I inform you that you can be more productive, and effective in executing whatever task you set out to do, rather than being tired behind your office desk with piles of unfinished projects? May I also inform you that there are several ways in which you can improve your productivity and effectiveness on tasks? Yes, it is possible, and that is the reason this book is compiled.

For two reasons, many people are not as productive as they wish, or think. The first reason is that the default setting of our mind is in a scattered state, and we are reactive about it, instead of being proactive. The second reason is that many bad habits interfere with our productivity. These two reasons are what keep drawing people back from their goals and prevent them from being productive.

Further, the importance of being productive can't be ignored, both in our personal and professional lives. If you run a business or are responsible for a team, you will want to ensure that everything goes according to plan without ignoring your productivity level. This is because your level of productivity is what will determine your level of success.

As we go through life, a lot of factors will inevitably want to contribute to why we can't be productive. However, if you are aware of how to tackle these factors, you can easily shield yourself from them, and become more effective and organized in your tasks.

Now the question: how can we become more productive and regain control? Please understand that there is no one-size-fits-all

approach, as only a systematic approach will work. However, it starts with putting our minds in order and substituting some reactive habits with good ones.

Do you want to know how to put your scattered mind in order and be able to focus better? Do you want to learn how to substitute those habits that keep you from being productive for the ones that will increase your productivity? Then this book will be offering you approaches that are geared towards that effect. And if you think you were productive, but not anymore, this book is also for you.

Read on and take charge of your mind.

CHAPTER 1

TIPS TO MANAGE YOUR SCATTERED BRAIN



Chapter 1: Tips to Manage Your Scattered Brain

It is advised that you do away with anything that will take away your attention off this section of the book because of the few questions that would be asked. Try as much as possible to answer them sincerely, and as best as you can:

- Do you have something you have to do, but it remains undone because there is no external push or deadline attached to it?
- Do you get distracted easily because everything in the world seems fascinating to you?
- Do you have a low motivation to begin something you would like to achieve?
- Do you usually veer off a task when you are at it?
- Do you think you want to do millions of things at once?

May I inform you that you are a scattered brain if your answers to these questions are “yes”? Permit me to welcome you to the club. Surprised? You are not the only person in this circle of the

scattered brain. There are thousands, and if not millions of such people out there.

While it might seem like a negative thing, understand that there is nothing wrong with not getting anything done, or being distracted often. You can fall into a stressful trap of avoidance, or even trying to cover up for lost times or something worse when it becomes constant.

But to help you out of this situation, I will be offering some effective tips below to help you deal with your scattered brain. These tips have proven effective for hundreds of people, and I believe they will also help you. However, ensure that you work with as many as you possibly can.

Recognize What You Have to do and Prioritize

In a lot of productivity books and articles, this advice is emphasized. One cannot overstate the importance of this idea. It is simple, clear, and equally very effective in helping you deal with your scattered brain.

You will never get the satisfaction of doing anything if you don't know what you want and stuff is just flying around in your head. You, therefore, have to make a list of everything that is on your mind. Ensure that you prioritize them accordingly. By so doing, you are telling your brain to stop bothering about the little things, and things that can wait, and focus on the most important things.

Break it down, and make it simple



Choose one to start with and break it down to the simplest form of

action once you have your list and you can then determine your top two to three tasks. You shouldn't take more than 15 to 30 minutes to complete each step. Break it down further if it takes longer.

Understand that if you have a smaller task, it would be easier to get it done, and the more you would want to stick with it. What you are doing is telling your brain to stay with it for 15 minutes.

Start the task and take it slowly

You might be tempted to speed things up just to save time, but don't. What it only does to your brain is to make it drift to what is next on your table, instead of focusing on what you are doing now. The brain is designed to only focus on one thought at a time. You, therefore, have to only focus on what you have in front of you. Do things deliberately and slowly. Once you complete your tasks, you will feel better.

Break is important

It is not advisable to work nonstop for hours. You will only burn

out your energy, which will make you lack the motivation to continue again. Take a break and do something fun after completing a 15-30 minutes' task. You can read books, articles, or whatever you feel like doing. You can move, stretch, walk, or do something you like doing. All that matters is that you don't take much time. 5-10 minutes is okay to do whatever you want to do; then go back to what you have to do.

Take a longer break, an hour or so, once you complete 4 tasks. You are guilt-free and you can do other things.

Practice focus

You need to learn how to meditate and do it if you want to have a laser-sharp focus. We all know that meditation is now mainstream, and even easy to do. You necessarily don't have to spend hours meditating. All you need is just 15-30 minutes. Research the form of meditation that suits you: mantra or breathing? Anyone is fine. However, training your brain to relax is the most important thing, either through breathing or the mantra.

Forget about the clock/work and watch in the interval

You don't have to become obsessed with the clock. Take some time to forget about it. It is not important when you begin working on something. You can get a timer and set it to a time you think you will be able to complete a task (ensure that the interval is no more than 30 minutes). Go for it when you start the timer. Until your time is up, don't stop. After that, you can take a break, and repeat.

Regardless of what time it is, pay attention to working and getting your tasks done. By so doing, instead of finding excuses to postpone things till the following day, you will be pushed to work.

Until your interval is done, don't do anything else

While your time seems to be for a specific task, don't do anything else. Just sit still and think about the task until your time is up if it is something that requires inspiration (such as writing), and it feels like you can't find your way.

If you can't seem to get started on the task at hand, don't be tempted to do something else. Before you know it, you will get the needed inspiration. You will be surprised at how effectively a few minutes of silence can help usher in your master craft.

Don't stop

Just pick up and start again if you fall off the wagon. You don't have a reason to give up. All you have to do is just to check what and where you went wrong, correct it, and keep going. Always learn from your mistake and move on to the next interval or task.

Remember: You can only become perfect by practicing.

Shutdown and reboot

Sometimes, you have to give yourself a break from your tasks and to-do lists and enjoy yourself. Keep your schedule free and avoid committing to anything. The time is meant for you to relax, and nothing more. You can use the time to go on a vacation and have fun with your loved ones.

The purpose of this free time is to help you empty your mental cache. Avoid squeezing in anything else during this period. You will feel motivated and energized to get back to your work after the break.

Make it interesting

Whatever task you have to do you can make it interesting for yourself. We all have a playful inner self, embrace it! You can employ your imagination to explore and ensure that you make the task fun. You will be surprised that even what you find mundane could be entertaining.

Imagine that someone is watching you and commending how awesome you have performed when you are working on a task. Or you can imagine that you are attempting to break your record or set a new record. You can converse with yourself as you work. Can you picture that?

The results you will get at the end of the day are determined by where you choose to put your energy and focus. You, therefore, have to do what gives you the best result in the way you enjoy it

the most. There is no turning back once you get going and keep going because things will get easier and you can start maximizing more of your mental power.

CHAPTER 2

HABITS THAT KILL YOUR PRODUCTIVITY AND FOCUS



Chapter 2: Habits that kill Your Productivity and Focus

If you want to make progress faster in your personal life and career, the two ingredients you need are your ability to be highly productive and your focus strength. However, for that to happen, there are a lot of sneaky productivity killers that can potentially prevent you from achieving success.

Despite disciplining and working hard, it might seem like you are not making headway because of some little habits that you may not be aware of that you possess.

From the position of a productivity expert, here are some of the habits that are silently killing your productivity and focus. Recognizing and eliminating these habits will enable you to become more productive and strengthens your focus, without needing to put in more hours or work harder.

In fact, you will be able to get much more done by working smarter instead of harder as soon as you get rid of these habits.

Habit 1-- Having Unnecessary tabs open on your Browser

When you are working online, close tabs that are not relevant to you again. Make sure that only the necessary tabs are open. One of the easiest ways to get distracted is seeing a notification on your email, Facebook, or messaging tabs. You will always be tempted to want to check what the notification is about. The urge will be too strong for you to resist. This is what will steal your attention, and can consequently drag you in. You can be sucked into the internet vortex capable of costing you the extra 20-45 minutes that could have been spent doing something more productive with *the "quick check."*

Further, by reacting to the notifications, you are essentially operating on autopilot where you help some people fulfill their agenda, instead of jealously protecting your time and trying to fulfill yours.

Habit 2-- Checking your Phone Immediately you wake in the Morning

Many people share this habit of always checking their phones first thing in the morning. We do this without even realizing that it is a bad habit. The problem is that we are instantly in a reactive mode when we do this, and this can easily make our focus, ideas, and thoughts to be hijacked by the notifications, emails, and messages we have received overnight. When this is done, instead of thinking of our goals, we would be forced to think about those messages.

Don't get this twisted. It is not bad checking your social media or emails in the morning, but when it forces you to operate reactively, instead of proactively towards generating new ideas for your goals, then it becomes a problem.

Habit 3-- Watching TV or Netflix first Thing in the Morning

Just like using your phone first thing in the morning, a lot of people still watch TV in the morning for at least 1 hour before

starting their day. This habit is a fast killer of your productivity and focus.

The fact is that you are already distracting your mind when you start your day by watching Netflix or TV first thing in the morning. What you are doing is to configure your mind to accommodate distractions for the rest of the day. Your brain will want more dopamine, as you have already started your day with it. When you have already numbed your mind by watching TV in the morning, it will be much harder to fight distraction.

More so, the time you spend with your TV can be used for something more productive such as committing yourself to empowering morning routines like reading inspiring books, visualizing, doing affirmations, reviewing your goals, planning your day, or meditating. You are setting yourself up for a highly productive and focused day by following a morning routine, unlike spending time watching Netflix or TV in the morning.

Habit 4-- Leaving Alerts and Notifications on

A very simple and fast change you can quickly implement to

improve your focus and productivity is to switch off your alerts and notifications on all your devices-- especially on your smartphones.



As previously mentioned, the alerts and notifications will always compete for your attention. Instead of putting you in a proactive mode, you will be forced to be in a reactive mode, because your attention is being controlled by someone else.

In fact, for every application alert left unseen, you will always be tempted to check it, as it opens a "loop" in your mind that needs

to be urgently closed. "*Zeigarnik Effect*" is what this is called. The psychological pulls of wanting to close the loop are just too strong to resist. This is usually difficult especially when our willpower is weak later in the day.

The habit of switching off your notification will not only make you productive and focused, but it will also help you become less overwhelmed and stressed. You will also discover peace of mind, knowing that you are in charge of your day. It will only take less than 3 minutes of your time. Try it and see for yourself.

To start, ensure that you switch off your notifications and alerts when you are working on your most important tasks in order for you to be able to direct all your energy and focus on it.

Habit 5-- Sleeping in

You tend to carry the lazy mindset throughout the rest of your day when you lazily start your day. Sleeping in quickly will position you in a lousy state of mind, which will make it much more difficult to motivate yourself to work hard. This is what leads to time-wasting and procrastination.

Habit 6-- Eating Bad Foods

Eating bad food is another focus and productivity killer. Your energy level will crash hard-- leaving you unable to work with intensity and focus when you eat bad food that contains a lot of sugar and trans-fat. Instead, ensure that you take enough healthy food and veggies to be able to fuel your brain and body, as they will provide you with the right vitamins to perform at your peak level.

You must also take things easy with the caffeine. If you like coffee, you have to consume it moderately so that you will not experience the downside but the benefits.

The author of *Hyperfocus*, Chris Bailey mentioned that consuming caffeine strategically can offer you focus and a productivity boost. It has been established that it helps to focus more intensely, and even improve your short-term memory if you consume up to 200 milligrams of caffeine, which is about 2 cups of coffee.

However, if you consume more than 200 milligrams, you will notice that the effects start diminishing. It will lead to decreased

focus and anxiety for amounts more than 400 milligrams. This should be strongly avoided.

You, therefore, need to strategically consume caffeine. When you are about to slide into a hyper-focus mode, drink a cup of coffee, and don't consume more than two cups per day, plus don't consume it after 17:00 because it will affect your quality of sleep.

Habit 7-- Not Drinking Enough Water

A lot of people often overlook the effect of drinking enough water. It is to be noted that drinking enough water helps to improve the performance of the brain, thereby making you work with more intensity and focus.

You will start to immediately feel the negative impact of not drinking water once you are dehydrated because the brain consists of 75 percent water. If you ask people who feel unfocused and sluggish, if they have had water, their response is likely to be a no.

In fact, not enough water will lead to lower energy production,

leaving you fatigued, not sharp, and foggy while drinking enough water ensures that the energy production of the brain is functioning well. The absence of enough water in your system will make it difficult for you to reach your flow state.

Habit 8-- Being Productive Versus Being Busy

One of the surest ways to destroy your productivity is not being able to distinguish between your important tasks and unimportant ones. Understand that not all tasks are the same. That is why you need to be able to recognize the difference between being busy and being productive. You must be aware that some tasks are more valuable than others. These tasks will usually require your skill, which brings about a more impactful result.

Instead of focusing on the value, you created (quality), if you merely focus on the number of tasks (quantity) you have completed throughout the day, you are looking at productivity from the wrong perspective. When you create a lot of value is when you can be productive, and not by the number of tasks you were able to do.

It was Peter Drucker who said: *"There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all."*

This is why some people are more productive just by working for few hours on one to two tasks, compared to someone else who works for 8 to 10 hours and crushed 25 different tasks.

Focus on how much value you have created instead of focusing on how much you have done. That is what productivity is all about.

Habit 9-- Not Scheduling Your Days and Weeks

If you pay more attention to your days, you will notice that most of all your unproductive days are days you didn't schedule well.

You will just wander around if you don't schedule your days and weeks. You already know what you want to do, and what you would like to achieve in a day, so you need to have a kind of work ethic. If you don't protect your time for the most valuable task, it will fall prey to other people's agenda or distractions.

Margarita Tartakovsky said: *"Productivity isn't about being a workhorse, keeping busy or burning the midnight oil... It's more about priorities, planning and fiercely protecting your time."*

This is why you have to develop a solid battle plan for your days and weeks. Ensure that you will be able to follow and execute those plans because it will help you make valuable decision-

making energy (which is a limited resource) during the day-- and function with more focus and determination.

You will notice that after scheduling your day, you won't have to bother about what to do next, because it has already been figured out. It might interest you to know that the moment you bother about what to do next is when procrastination sets in. You will be able to work with more ease with clarity.

Habit 10-- Putting Your To-do List in Your Mind

The habit of storing your to-do lists and tasks for the day in your mind is a bad habit that kills focus and reduces productivity. It is better to take some minutes to externalize your to-do list before you start the day.

Your brain is designed to problem-solve, focus, generate new ideas, and think critically. It is not a place for storage of tasks or new ideas. However, your attentional space is filled to the brim when you store all your to-dos in your mind. And when this happens you won't have space to focus intensely or generate new

ideas. Take it as a computer with no space for a hard drive.

You will experience a lot of stress and anxiety when you store many things in your mind, as you have a lot of mental loops that want to be closed (check habit 4 for the Zeigarnik Effect).

All you have to do is to put your to-do list on paper. It is no surprise that journalizing is a powerful habit. Lots of thoughts on the mind will lead to worries, unclear ideas, and no attentional space for generating new ideas or solving problems. However, you will experience better thinking, peace of mind, and clarity as soon as you do a "brain dump" in which you write down everything on your mind.

Habit 11-- Multi-Tasking

Research has revealed that it will take an average of 25 minutes to regain your full focus on a task at hand once you shift your attention from it or become distracted.

Psychologists call this attention residue, which means that some of your attention is still left behind on the previous task your brain

was handling. If you switch your brain from task to task, your brain's energy and focus will decrease.

Steve Uzzell said, *"Multitasking is merely the opportunity to screw up more than one thing at a time."*

This is the reason some people become worn out and tired at the end of the day, even though their job is less demanding. You, therefore, have to avoid multitasking and focus on a task at a time. By so doing, you will have more energy and focus to crush the tasks on your tables.

Habit 12—Procrastinating

You must note that procrastination is one of the top enemies of success. It has made the dreams of many ambitious people find their way to the grave. In the real sense, all the habits above lead to procrastination. So, you will already find it easier to stop procrastinating and start crushing your tasks when you aim to remove these habits out of your life.

If you have been trying to overcome procrastination, with no

success, everything you need to know about it and how to easily overcome it is being discussed below.

CHAPTER 3

DEALING WITH PROCRASTINATION



Chapter 3: Dealing with Procrastination

Procrastination and laziness are not the same. However, it is common for people to often confuse the two terms. When you sometimes procrastinate, it doesn't mean that you are lazy. When you are lazy, it means you are displaying attitudes such as unwillingness to act, apathy, and just wanting to remain inactive. On the other hand, when someone procrastinates, it means such person is choosing to do something else, instead of the task at hand.

Procrastination, in most cases, usually comes when you are trying to avoid work you don't find enjoyable but important. When you procrastinate, you are exposed to the risk of not achieving your goals, because it will lead to low or no productivity. For instance, you can feel ashamed by the slight occurrences of procrastination, which can potentially bring about some consequences you won't like.

In some instances, you can be disillusioned by work, which can make you depressed and even lose your job if you have been notorious for procrastinating over a long time. People are more likely to put off an unpleasant task when they see it. In recent research, it was established that the inability to manage stress can lead to procrastination. Also in psychology, it was established that people who procrastinate have a faulty sense of time. This means that such people usually think they have the whole time in the whole world to perform their tasks.

In addition, procrastination can affect your self-esteem, and can make you put off a task, and can also make you less critical. It has also been established that procrastinators experience greater regret and have more sleep issues, compared to those who don't procrastinate. Procrastination can also bring about health problems, increased stress, and poorer performance.

Recognizing Procrastination

If you are the type that switches focus a lot and likes putting things off indefinitely, you are probably a procrastinator. However, if you are delaying an important task for a good reason, you are

not a procrastinator. You may be procrastinating because you trying to re-prioritize your workload. If you are a procrastinator, there are other ways to figure that out:

- If you are fond of reading emails over and over again, without making any concrete decision on what to do about them, then you are a procrastinator.
- If you are so fond of always waiting for the right time or wanting to be in the mood before tackling any problem, then you are a procrastinator.
- You also tend to procrastinate if you have started your high-priority task, then leave it to make coffee.
- If you have left some important items unattended on your to-do list without a strong reason, then you are a procrastinator.
- You are also likely to procrastinate when you fill your time with things people asked you to, instead of spending time on yours.
- If your day is usually filled with low-priority tasks, you are likely to procrastinate.
- You are likely to procrastinate if you leave important items on your to-do list for a long time.

The Reasons You Procrastinate

You need to have a good understanding of what procrastinating is, before you can begin to tackle it. For instance, if you like avoiding a task because you find it uninteresting or unpleasant, you can easily take some steps to kick away that unpleasant task, for you to be able to focus on the one you find enjoyable. When you are not well-organized, it could lead to procrastination. Check out someone who is organized and you will notice that such person doesn't procrastinate. They follow their schedule strictly. There are a lot of things that can help you organize your deadlines and priorities effectively.

Sometimes, you can be organized and still be overwhelmed at the same time. One of the reasons could be that you bother too much about failing and doubt your ability to effectively carry out a task, which makes you, therefore, seek succor in your comfort zone, and put off the task.

Some people still feel success will lead rushed by requests of taking more responsibilities, which makes them scared of success, as much as failure. Perfectionist prefers avoiding a task they feel

their experience or skill is not sufficient to handle. It might interest you to also note that perfectionists are usually procrastinators. If you can't decide what to do, you will likely put off taking action in case you do the wrong thing. You must also note that making poor decisions also contributes to the major cause of procrastination.

Adopting Anti-Procrastination Strategies

Ensure that you adhere to the different strategies that will be provided below to give yourself the best chance of focusing and succeeding because habits will only stop when you make deliberate efforts to avoid them through strategies. You must also note that you can't break procrastination overnight, as it is ingrained in our pattern of behavior.

Studies have also shown that when you forgive yourself it can help you feel positive about yourself. What this means is that you need to forgive yourself for procrastinating in the past.

You can employ this strategy to help you avoid procrastinating. Be specific about the time you want to finish a work and ensure that

you stay focus on it till you finish the task.

You must acknowledge how good it feels when you complete the task. You may want to reward yourself with a treat, a slice of cake, or a coffee at your favorite coffee shop if you finish your task at the targeted period. So, before you begin a task, promise to reward yourself when you finish at the stipulated time.

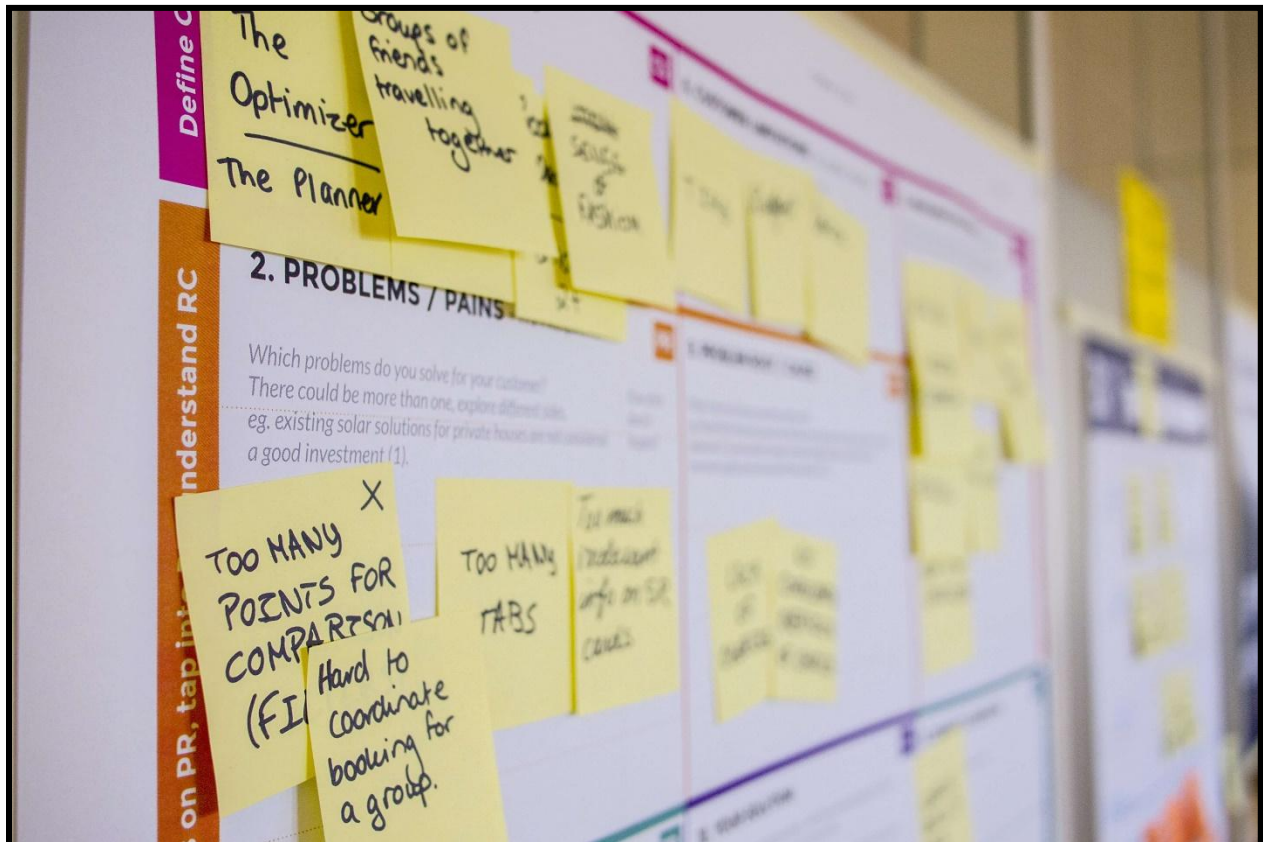
It is also important to ask either a family member or a friend to always check up on you because pressure works, and it is the principle behind a self-help group. Some people don't have people to check up on them, if you are one of such, you can use an online tool like Procraster to help monitor you.

If you are in the habit of piling up tasks over the day, you will find the tasks overwhelming to implement. The best option will be to tackle the tasks as they arise.

To also help you minimize distractions, you have to switch off the notifications of your mobile devices, as well as note whether you sit close to the television to avoid distractions.

Every day, your aim should be to *"eat an elephant beetle"*. This means you need to find a way to get off the task you find the least

pleasurably as early as possible before you move to your enjoyable tasks. The task you find enjoyable will serve as a reward for taking off the task you don't find pleasurable.



When you adopt the phrase "I choose to," you will feel more in control of your project, which implies that you own a project. But the twist about it is that it can make you feel self-sabotaged and disempowered.

But when you adopt another phase or rephrase your internal dialogue to something like: "*I have to*" or "*I need to*", for example,

it means that you just have to do it, and you have no other option than to do it.

You can combat procrastination by identifying the long-term benefit of completing your task. You can ask yourself if procrastinating is going to affect the end of the year bonus you are supposed to receive or your annual performance review. A study has revealed that impulsive people who are focused on short-term benefits and gains are more likely to procrastinate. If you always procrastinate because you find a task unpleasant, try focusing on the long-term benefits it will offer.

Another approach you can employ to make a task enjoyable for you is to consider the consequences it will bear if you ignore it, and its negative effects on your organizational goals, team, and yourself. For example, you need to question yourself: *“If I don’t complete this job, what will happen? Or if I procrastinate this task, what will happen?”* Sometimes, all you need to get going and complete a task is just a trial.

Even though you seem uninterested in a task, just attempt it as you may not find it as bad as you had anticipated because, at times, we overestimate how unpleasant we would find a task, which sometimes turns out to be false. Looking at its relevance

and meaning is a useful way to reframe how we view a task. This can even help to increase the value of the task to you and make it worthwhile while you are at it.

Just like any other bad habit, it is possible to overcome procrastination. If you struggle with pulling through with tasks, attempt any of these tips listed below:

- The tasks you find most difficult should be done at the time you are most effective and focused. Identify the time you function at your optimal. Know whether you perform better in the morning, afternoon, or even at night. The most important thing is to tackle the hardest task at your peak.
- Become a pro at scheduling and project planning. There are many online tools you could use to help with your schedules plus plans and consequently they reduce your stress if you don't know where to start when you have multiple or big projects at once.
- Use Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle to prioritize your to-do list. This principle will enable you to be able to identify the activity that needs your attention now, and the ones that can wait.
- Understand that a to-do list will merely prevent you from forgetting about those unpleasant and overwhelming tasks you

don't want to do.

- Giving yourself a deadline to accomplish a task also works. It will keep you on track to achieving your goals, and this will mean that you won't want to procrastinate on any of your tasks or schedule. You, therefore, need to attach a deadline to your tasks.
- There are many apps online that can help you become more organized. You can look up time and tasks management apps to help remind and accomplish your tasks.
- Organize your tasks into smaller units and focus on them, rather than finishing them. If you are prone to delaying projects because you find them overwhelming, try breaking them down into manageable bits.

You will feel less overwhelmed and more positive when you accomplish small wins, which will even make you look forward to a larger project. These small wins will give you a sense of accomplishment.

Finally, if you think you are putting something off because you find it hard to decide or you can't decide what action to take, go through these tips and help yourself to move forward.

CHAPTER 4

**RULES TO MASTER
YOUR FOCUS AND
ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS**



Chapter 4: Rules to Master Your Focus and Achieve Your Goals

In the 21st century, focus is a recipe for success.

Do you consider it a bold statement? Of course, it is. However, you have to first consider the following:

- Are you aware that for you to be successful, you need to first understand what success means for you, and set your goals accordingly?
- You need to identify the project that has the biggest impact on your goal, in order to achieve these goals.
- It is common for people to be distracted now, because our emails, notifications, etc., are fast distractions.
- And being distracted will take us some minutes back before we can focus on the task again.
- As a result, we become busy almost 24/7 and still end up not doing anything tangible.
- At the end of it all, we end up unsuccessful and stressed.

Does this make sense?

Now the question: what are the rules you need to note to achieve extraordinary results and master your focus?

Your week Should be Planned According to your top 3 Goals

You may consider taking an hour or two on Sunday, or even on Monday morning to look at the top 3 goals you would like to achieve, and then plan your week accordingly. When you are planning, ensure it aligns with your long-term vision, which determines your daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and ultimately yearly goals. You will avoid getting lost in the busy trap and will be able to make real progress on the projects that are important by intentionally planning time for deep work on your most important goals.

Identify your WHY

At a point in time, a project will eventually get to a point where it will become harder and harder, and at that point, the only thing that can push you through is your motivation and energy. This is the same point where people lose their focus and switch to something else. This is why you need to know your WHY for you to keep your eye on the prize and relentlessly focus on your goals. Deep down, you need to know why you are doing it. You need to be able to identify the reason you set the goal in the first place. You also need to be able to foresee how achieving that goal will improve your life.

Time-Block Like you Mean it

Whenever you have work to do, schedule it in your calendar like a meeting. And treat it like you mean it. If you reschedule it at the last minute because you have something else to do, or even ignore it, you may not be able to achieve your goals. The earlier you take your time blocks seriously, the more significant your progress on your goals will occur. This will also mean that you respect yourself, your time, and that of everyone around you.

Have the Strong Will to say no

When you focus on one thing, it means you won't be able to focus on something else. There is no way you can stay focused on keeping fit, and losing weight, while at the same time partying all weekends with your friends. Doing that will mean that you will ruin all the effort you have invested into losing weight over the week. The same logic applies to your work. There is no way you can focus on everything at once. You have to decide what is important for you and say no to unimportant things.

Begin your day with Strong Intentions

For you to focus, you need to be able to proactively choose what to work on. Going for back-to-back meetings or checking your phone first thing in the morning can automatically derail your focus for the day, leaving you busy, but not productive. Thus, you need to choose to start the day with an intention by questioning yourself: *"what would it be if I could only do one thing today to make progress on my goals?"* The question to your answer is what you should do first thing in the morning. If it won't be possible, block out deep work time during the day, and adhere to it.

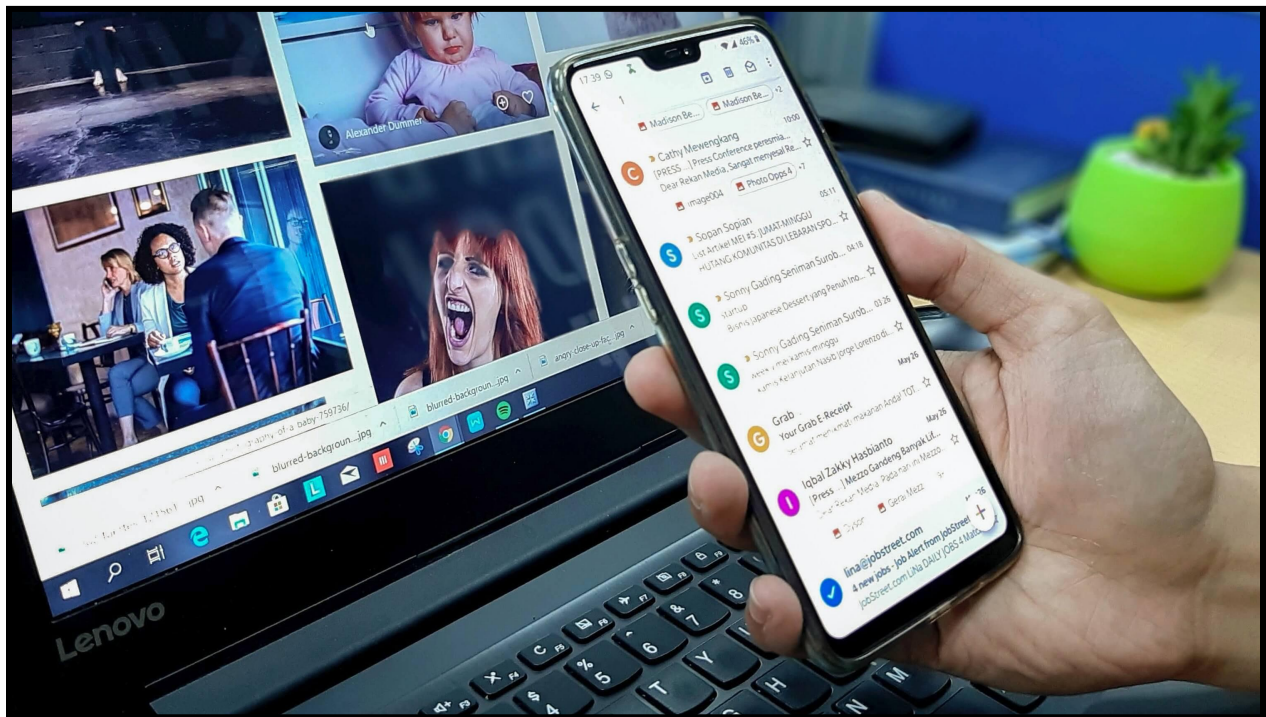
It is worthy of note that making it a rule to keep morning for deep work and leaving email for the afternoon can have a great impact on increasing your focus, and that is if your productive time is morning. One of the 4 deadly mistakes that ruin your productivity is being reactive instead of proactive and intentional.

Create Your Deep Work Area

Sitting down to work on your important project and blocking out time is one thing. Working on it is another. There will still be distracting notifications, urgent incoming requests from colleagues, and your ability to focus on your task. You need to consciously engineer your environment in a way that allows you to fully focus to get the most out of your deep work time. This doesn't look the same for everyone.

For some, it means going to some place where they focus, such as a library, an empty conference room, a coffee shop, and so on. For other people, it might mean closing their office door, wearing their headphones, or signaling to people that they are in a no distraction mode. And for others, it might be very early in the morning, or after the kids are already asleep in the night.

Keeping Distractions out



Try to identify the top 5 things that keep you distracted when you are trying to work on important tasks. We all have our vices. We, therefore, have to design a no-distraction strategy for ourselves. You may consider these few ideas.

- **If you are always distracted by your boss or colleague:**
You can approach this scenario this way. Have them agree on a "*no distraction*" time with you. Encourage them to use coffee breaks and lunch to talk things with you and agree on which questions are classified urgent. An example is the time someone is entirely blocked to continue with a work that needs

urgent attention. Also, agree on the topics to be discussed in your weekly meetings.

- **If you get lost in YouTube binges or distracted by social media:** Tools like OFFTIME and StayFocusd can help you limit the time you spend on certain apps or sites.
- **When you feel the urge to usually reply to every mail the moment you see them:** You need to schedule a time slot for replying to your emails, and systematically work through them all at once. Turn off your email for the rest of the day or install a tool such as IFTTT to send you a mail when you receive an email from your investor, priority clients, or boss, for example.

Employ the Pomodoro Technique

This is one of the most powerful techniques that can help you focus on a task at a time. This is how it works: split your tasks into 25 minutes' intervals. Then set a timer and shut off all your distractions. Take 5 minutes to break after your Pomodoro, before starting another one. This technique works effectively because of its gamification. There are even apps that can help you using this technique such as Focus Booster, Focus Keeper.

Take Care of your Body

A pain-ridden, tired, sleep-deprived body is a great recipe for killing your productivity because it leads to an increased level of stress hormones, impaired memory, and decreased mental ability to focus. Therefore, prioritize proper nutrition, exercise, sleep, and off-time to recharge your battery if getting stuff done is important to you.

Increase your Mental Focus Through Mindfulness

Taking care of your body is as important as taking care of your mind because an inspired, focused, and calm mind is the basis for working productively. Calm your monkey mind with journaling, yoga, meditation, and getting out of your head every week by enjoying nature, and taking time away from the screen, and spending time with your loved ones.

Note: Being unfocused comes with a price. You need to get clear on what you want and focus your time, attention, and energy if you want to be ultra-successful. These rules will help you become

more focused in life.

CHAPTER 5

THE REAL REASON WE ARE CONSTANTLY DISTRACTED



Chapter 5: The Real Reason we are Constantly Distracted

We have got things inside-out when it comes to how to be more focused. Even though our Facebook, Instagram, thousands of notifications, phone calls, WhatsApp, and what have you constitute the majority of what distracts us today, they are not the real reasons for our distractions.

It might interest you to note that, our mind is responsible for this distraction, according to research conducted by two Harvard psychologists. Psychologists Daniel Gilbert and Matthew Killingsworth discovered that the human mind is wired to be continually distracted. These two psychologists researched with 2,250 adults, and it was concluded that we spend around 47 percent of every waking hour "*mind wandering*." This is also known as "*stimulus-independent thought*." When our mind wanders, we don't even notice it because it is so natural and ordinary to us.

Mind-wandering is fantasizing about that dream company or position you hope to have in a few years, or waiting at the gate for your plane. It is driving in your car thinking about how you forgot to reply to some emails in the morning. It is picturing yourself in a conference call sitting on a bench in Bali with a cocktail. We can all recognize this state because it is mostly the default mode of the brain.



There are two implications to this insight. First, it reveals that distraction is a default mind game. The path has to include developing a new habit of not effectively managing our precious

resources if we want to skillfully manage the distractions more and if we want to get focus.

The second implication is that; we have to pay less attention to what we are *doing* and more to how we are *being*. This research also reveals that wandering of the mind is connected to unhappiness rather than activities. We don't usually think this way. Most of us believe that doing pleasant things will make us happy. However, the research shows that activities are just 4.6 of our happiness. Instead of time traveling, being truly here account for 10.8 percent. We need to now ask ourselves an important question: *"So how can we shift from wandering to focus?"* Here is how.

Pay Attention to when Your Mind Starts Wandering

This is difficult because mind wandering is like a dream. Understand that you are not aware of what is happening when you are rehearsing an argument you think you are about to have with a coworker. That moment is when you are oblivious to what is happening around you. Therefore, it starts with your ability to notice when you get caught in a wandering state. And it is difficult

to the extent that you may need to set up a cue that will help you remember to notice.

Shift your Attention, and Focus on the Present

Shifting your attention to what is happening in the present when you notice you are mind-wandering is also helpful. It could be listening fully to the person you are talking to, engaging fully in the email you are typing, or tasting the last crumbs of food you just had in your mouth. When you are idle, you can pay attention to blaring car horns, the wind, the sensation in your body, or paying attention to sights.

Rewire, Refocus, and Savor the Moment

Strengthening the habit of the mind is the final step. All you need is just 15 to 30 seconds to remain in the state and savor the experience of being here.

The truth is, just dropping the habit of mind wandering is not only difficult but it is also impossible. So, you need to know that if you caught yourself getting swept and forgetting, know that you are

not doing anything wrong. You are only being human.

CHAPTER 6

TOOLS TO ELIMINATE DISTRACTION



Chapter 6: Tools to Eliminate Distraction

A study conducted at Stanford University showed that those who multitask are less efficient because they are exposed to distraction from irrelevant sources. Eliminating distraction is a gradual practice, but if you want something that will help you get started with eliminating it, some tools could be helpful. Here are some, but the first two tools are used to measure your time are.

Rescue Time

This app is used to measure the time you spent on other applications and websites. Rescue Time allows you to be time smart and makes you conscious of how you use your time.

Time Doctor

This tool is also used to track your time while ensuring that you are productive at work. The reports of the websites and apps you used will be generated by Time Doctor. It will inform you if your valuable time has been spent on a website or app.

Tools to Block Distractions

Freedom

Freedom tool helps you to block the sites that distract you the most for a specified time. It takes less than 5 minutes to set up and helps you get years of less procrastination and distraction-free time.

KeepMeOut

You are allowed to set a time limit on the app or website that you feel distracts you the most. For example, you can limit your time on Instagram to 20 minutes a day, and you can do that for other apps and websites.

AntiSocial

This tool is only concerned about the time you spend on social media. You may have been in a situation where you would like to spend some minutes, on social media, but before you know what's going on, you had already spent an hour. With AntiSocial on your device, it can help you remove that temptation.

StickK

This is an anti-procrastination app. It works like this: you set a goal plus the deadline, and then decide what your stake is and who's the recipient. You can use as little as \$10 for your stake. The recipient could be a family member, a friend, or a foe. Procrastinate and miss the deadline, and the money goes to someone else.

Inbox Pause

Constant messages can distract you. You can use Inbox Pause when you are rushing to meet a deadline, on vacation, trying to get through the email already clogging your inbox, on a date, or

any important activity to you.

TomatoTimer

This task helps you work hard on a task and then reminds you to take a break every 20 or 25 minutes. Tomato Timer won't block you from distracting websites but remind you to take a break.

Strict Workflow

This tool is a chrome extension, and it helps you block distracting websites for you to work hard for 25 minutes, bearing in mind that a 5 minutes' break is on its way.

Focus@Will

Focus@Will is different from other distraction elimination tools. Smart people like Ned Hallowell have proven it to work. This is a tool that includes a collection of original music compositions that helps you focus and remove distraction.

SoundShade

Are you considering a trip into nature, while you become creative? You can get free sounds of nature from SoundShade. It is described as *"non-disturbing sound scenes that mask unnecessary noise."*

FocusWriter

It is a distraction-free word processing app. It helps to sink you deep into your work for as much time as possible. Distractions such as Facebook, Instagram, and other notifications are hidden by FocusWriter, while you work on meeting your deadline. It has the feature to track your daily writing time and daily writing goals.

HeyFocus

HeyFocus is another option to enable you to reach your writing goals. Just with a click, you can block distracting sites such as

Twitter, Reddit, Facebook, and so on. What's more, you can also set a schedule for this app on the go.

Of course, more apps can help you eliminate distractions. Given the list above, you can use one to measure the time you've spent on sites, one to block distractions, one for musical accomplishment as you work, and one to write.

CHAPTER 7

OVERCOMING TECH ADDICTION



Chapter 7: Overcoming Tech Addiction

As technology advances, with the innovation of smartphones and the internet, a study has revealed the increasing number of people battling with tech addiction. Almost at every corner of the world, you will see both the young and adults constantly checking their phone-- particularly their social media account. It can be concluded that this irrational habit of always checking the phone is caused by the fear of being left out or missing out. This is the reason why tech addition has been included in the long list of behavioral addictions by scientists.

Addiction and mental disorder specialists have categorized tech addiction with other behavioral addictions such as gambling and sex. A notable feature of behavioral addiction also includes a progressive inability to limit, control or regulate the behavior. Also, a level of similarities exists between obsessive-compulsive disorder and technology addictions.

This generation can't be separated from the increased use of technology and continuous connectivity. However, a good percentage of people have crossed from the normal usage to the level where it is harming their productivity. Technology addiction includes social media networking, video games, web surfing, and others.

How to Know if you are a Tech Addict

When you feel on the edge when you don't know where your gadget is every time: You are a tech addict if you start feeling anxious and sweaty whenever your gadget is not within your reach, or not with you for some minutes. David Brudo, who is the CEO and Co-founder of the mental wellbeing and personal development app Remote, recommends reducing your intake bit-by-bit as against just trying to shut your addiction off at once.

He said: *"Try to cut back on using your phone gradually. Try simply not checking it unless you actually need to use it. Or, leave your phone at home when you go out for dinner or grocery shopping. This way it will help you change your habits in small dosages."*

When your family and friends have commented on your inability to leave your phone during a conversation: It will harm you when you start ignoring your loved ones in favor of your gadgets.

If you feel uneasy when you haven't checked your social media feeds or timeline in a day: Your attention span and also your inability to communicate with others would be affected by your prolonged use of your smartphone. If this sounds like you, then you are a tech addict.

If you are envying the life other people are living on social media: The life of FOMO and envy are some of the curses of the millennial. You need to understand that whatever you see on social media are the things people want you to see. It doesn't mean that is their normal way of life. We mostly don't get the full pictures, but highlights.

If you check up on people that don't know you more than your loved ones: Of course, the social media is a social platform where we get to interact with people. However, many people use it to chat with people they don't know and that can result in feeling lonely when such people don't reply to their messages. If you are stalking unknown people more than your loved ones, then you are

addicted.

If you worry a lot about your witty caption or best angle:

When you start worrying about how people perceive you online, while losing your identity, then you need to take some steps back on technology.

You respond to messages swiftly and become annoyed

when others are slow or don't reply: You might find it normal to reply to messages swiftly, but some people can't keep up with that. And if they don't reply to your messages with such speed, you become annoyed. If this describes you, then you need to consider a digital detox.

How to Overcome Tech Addiction?

You need consistency and dedication to overcome tech addiction. Also overcoming tech addiction requires a gradual process of reducing your usage of gadgets. One thing you must note is that there is no wrong or right way to do this. All that is required is for you to do anything that will take your mind off the screen. Here is a little nudge for you to get started.



Have a list of the devices you use daily

This list should contain the average hour you spend on the device daily, just to have an idea of how to overcome it. This will also help you track your reliance on technology, and how your time can be effectively managed.

Don't make unrealistic goals

For someone who is addicted to phones, it is not feasible to stay without using your phones for two weeks, all things being equal. Begin with a small achievable goal.

Switch on the flight mode

You can start small with this. You won't receive unnecessary notifications or calls when you do this often, as this will help you resist the urge to always check your phone. You can put your phone on airplane mode for one hour, then increase it gradually.

Have a notification-less day

This might be difficult at first. But it will help you in the long run. You can use apps to help you in that regard. This also helps to prevent the temptation of always checking your phone.

Get a real clock

A study has shown that 79 percent of people check their phone first thing in the morning every morning to see the time. By so

doing, it usually leads many people to check their social media accounts, instead of using that time for productive activity. When you get a clock, you won't have to check your phone in the morning to know the time.

Schedule a tech-free trip

A family trip when the use of tech is extremely minimal can help elevate your mood, as you will have time to connect with your family and share interesting moments with them. A study has revealed that as much as 95% of people have a mood change when they travel.

Have a routine

For you to be able to overcome tech addiction, you need to find productive activities to replace the time you spend with your gadgets. It can be reading, exercising, yoga, or anything that interests you.

Seek help

Talk to your friends and loved ones about your intention to reduce your heavy reliance on technology. Spend time with them and ask them to motivate and caution you when you are sliding back.

CHAPTER 8

TIME MANAGEMENT



Chapter 8: Time Management

A lot of people are confused when defining time management. What most people are aware of is that there are different ways of getting a task accomplished. However, a good number of people find it hard to get things done even though we have the same 24 hours.

To explain it, time management is all about how we use our time every day. Some people have the natural ability to use their time judiciously and achieve more in lesser time, but the fact is that not everyone can do it. It is important to understand that there is no secret to time management, but strategies.

Whenever you wake up every day, you have the option to allow your day to control you, or you control your day. The way you spend your time, is therefore what time management means.



What Does Time Management Include?

Much of what you need to manage your time has been discussed in this book, and it can be separated into:

- Scheduling
- Planning
- Prioritizing
- Task Delegation
- Goal setting

Conclusion

The book has touched on how to manage your scattered mind, ways you can master your focus, why you are always distracted, how distraction kills our productivity, how to handle procrastination, how to prioritize, ways you can overcome tech addiction, and what time management truly is.

If you want to achieve your goals, live a successful, and happy life, you need to learn how to put your mind in order and focus on your tasks. The mind has the natural tendency to be loaded with both important and unimportant activities, thus bring about continuous distractions and waste of time.

To effectively handle the situation of putting the mind in order and focus, we have to take proactive steps and be deliberate about the approaches that will be employed. It is encouraged that you consider this book as a life-long manual to help you maximize your time, and help you achieve more with less. Adhere to the tips, and practical steps recommended and you will be glad you did.